

## Crafting Florida's energy future

Cocoa meeting on Friday will tackle global warming

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For Florida residents, increased concern about climate change is understandable.

The potential problem of rising sea levels would affect coastal and inland residents alike. None of us live more than 80 miles from either the Gulf or the Atlantic.

But it's important to keep in mind that Florida's future is brighter than the many circulating negative and conflicting climate change messages may indicate.

With Florida's people, economy and environment in mind, the Florida Energy Commission (FEC) is working harder and faster to develop a state climate action plan to be included in its report to the Legislature, due Dec. 31.

Once submitted, these recommendations will be poised to become Florida's official energy policy.

Almost unanimous public demands at meetings held by the FEC and its advisory groups deliver a unified message about climate change: "Stop planning, and start acting."

Twenty-two other states have done just that.

These states have discovered that implementing an energy policy that tackles both climate change and energy use is likely to result in long-term economic growth.

Bringing renewable and clean energy industries to Florida could mean more jobs, increased state revenue and an influx of out-of-state dollars.

Even more importantly, a comprehensive energy policy would protect Florida's unrivaled beauty and fun, casual atmosphere. In 2006, 84.6 million tourists came to experience Florida for themselves.

We Floridians are lucky to live here, and the way of life we enjoy is bound to protecting the beauty of the Sunshine State.

The FEC is charged to provide recommendations to the Florida Legislature to guide its choices in the best energy practices and options for Florida. In order to do this at all, we must have public participation. In order to do it right, we must have constant, increasing public participation.

Let's keep the lights on. Tomorrow's Floridians deserve to have access to energy that is reliable, affordable and efficient.

The FEC will meet this Friday at the Florida Solar Energy Center in Cocoa, which is located on the Brevard Community College Campus at 1679 Clear Lake Road. The meeting starts at 9 a.m. in the H. George Carrison Auditorium.

I hope the Central Florida energy community -- which really includes all of its residents -- will join the FEC in securing Florida's future.

For additional FEC meeting information, visit the Commission's web site at [www.floridaenergycommission.gov](http://www.floridaenergycommission.gov) or e-mail [info@floridaenergycommission.gov](mailto:info@floridaenergycommission.gov).

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